

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Democratic Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
House Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John B. Larson
Chairman
House Democratic Caucus
202A Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone Jr.
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, Chairmen Larson, Waxman, Rangel, Pallone, and Stark:

We write you today to bring to your attention the urgent unattended needs of 4.5 million Americans. Earlier this week, the representatives from the U.S. territories sent a letter to President Obama. In that letter, which we have enclosed, they asked President Obama to work with House leadership to ensure that their constituents are fully and fairly integrated into the national health care system.

As the chairs of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, we strongly support the efforts of the territories

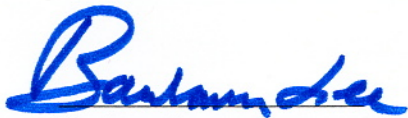
to obtain parity in any health care reform legislation adopted by this Congress. U.S. citizens and nationals in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands must have the same access to this reform as U.S. citizens in California, Ohio, Maryland or Virginia. We ask for parity for the territories because the current underfunded treatment in federal health care programs they endure is as out of place today as the immoral education standard of separate but equal that existed in our nation more than 40 years ago. It is time for a change and for parity.

As a result of chronic underfunding by the federal government, too many patients in the territories receive second-tier care; too many providers in the territories are inadequately compensated for their services; and too much of the financial burden associated with health care delivery is shouldered by the territorial governments.

The moral and public policy arguments in favor of eliminating these disparities are compelling. Just as it would be unacceptable to deprive U.S. citizens, living in cities such as Oakland or Baltimore, of equal access to any health care reform legislation adopted, depriving U.S. citizens (and U.S. nationals) living in the territories of the right is also unacceptable.

The time to do what it is right by our fellow Americans is now, and we must seize this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee
Chair
Congressional Black Caucus



Mike Honda
Chair
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus

Nydia M. Velázquez
Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus